DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 183 336 RC 011 896

TITLE	Guidelines for the Planning of Rural Areas in Europe. A Contribution to an Overall European Regional Planning Policy. Conference Report Presented by the Belgian and German Delegations.
INSTITUTION	Council of Europe, Strasbourg (France).
REPORT NO	CEMAT-78-1
PUB DATE	Oct 78
NOTE	34p.; Not available in paper copy due to publisher's preference. Paper presented at the European Conference of Ministers Responsible for Regional Planning (Vienna, Austria, October 5-7, 1978). For related documents see RC 011 894-897
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Change Strategies; Cooperation; *Cooperative Planning; *Ecological Factors; Economic Development; *Policy Formation; Problems; Quality of Life; *Regional Planning; Rural Areas; *Rural Development; *Socioeconomic Influences; Urban Areas
IDENTIFIERS	*European Conf of Ministers Respon Region Planning

ABSTRACT

Rural regional planning that will satisfy man's real needs, and not merely those of an economic nature, must take into consideration all factors, all possible interactions, and most important of all, those values which cannot be expressed in terms of money. The report details the functions and problems of rural areas revealed by analyses of rural areas, metropolitan areas, and main development axes. Problems are categorized into two main groups: socio-economic (caused by climatic conditions, geomorphology, and eccentric positions in relation to major axes of economic growth) and ecological problems. Objectives and strategies studied for the development and planning of rural areas show that measures are not yet directed towards European needs but are generally intended to serve national interests. While this makes data comparison difficult, all policies reflect a fairly uniform trend: to combat the adverse consequences of urban concentration; to limit the pressure of immigration on urban centers; to slow down rural depopulation and strengthen the structure of rural areas; and to reduce disparities, especially in underdeveloped regions. (NEC)

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PLANNING FOR RURAL AREAS IN EUROPE

Conference report presented by the Belgian and German delegations

RC 011886

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE

FOR REGIONAL PLANNING

4th Session

Vienna, 5-7 October 1978

GUIDELINES FOR THE PLANNING OF RURAL AREAS IN EUROPE

A contribution to an overall European regional planning policy

CONFERENCE REPORT

presented by the delegations of Belgium and Germany

Council of Europe

Strasbourg

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INTRODUCTION

At their first conference held in Bonn in 1970, the Ministers responsible for Regional Planning adopted a resolution stating that the Ministers should build a common foundation for a European regional planning policy in order to ensure "a more balanced use of European territory and a harmonious development of its various regions".

This intention was confirmed in the resolutions of the second and third conferences held respectively at La Grande Motte (1973) and Bari (1976). At the Bari conference, the general theme was "Urbanisation within the framework of regional planning".

Here it was suggested that the following, ie fourth conference should continue the analysis of a European regional planning policy, dealing with specific themes.

If therefore an overall view of territorial structures is to be gained, it is necessary to deal with rural areas.

Such a study will make it possible to identify not only those functions peculiar to rural areas but also the way in which rural and urban areas are complementary.

Rural areas are characterised, of course, by agriculture and forestry. They also serve to safeguard natural assets and spaces needed for recreation, second homes and holiday and tourist activities. Some rural problems need to be tackled in an individual manner, eg rural housing.

The uncontrolled expansion of urban conurbations and the development of new settlements outside them are hostile to the traditional nature of rural areas. It is essential to indicate the qualities specifically for rural areas in order to build up a counterweight to urban development.

It is for this reason that the Belgian delegation has put forward this theme for the fourth conference.

Furthermore, in accordance with the resolutions adopted at previous conferences, the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany has proposed the discussion of metropolitan areas and main axes (1) in connection with the development of a policy for European regional planning, and in particular in terms of the interrelationship of metropolitan areas and axes, and their joint effect on the opening up and development of rural regions.

An inventory of metropolitan areas and main axes is a useful basis for the integrated planning of regional development for Europe. In this context special attention will be given to the centripetal effects of metropolitan areas and main development axes and their consequences for those peripheral areas and regions where there is a certain amount of under-development.

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(1) The term "axes" includes development axes, communication axes and axes of industrial and settlement concentrations. Fur further definition see pages 11 and 13.

A contribution to the integrated planning of regional development in Europe will also be provided as a result of the work concerned with local centres and the structure of main development axes, jointly undertaken so far by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

General diagnosis

a. For rural areas

Over a period of years, the economic activities of rural areas have slowly declined whilst those in urban areas have increased.

Industrial and tertiary activities have come to account for an increasing proportion of the gross national product. Parallel to a change in economic structure, has been an increase in the location of economic activities in towns and cities. These two phenomena together with the rapid modernisation of farming and the resultant decrease in labour requirements account for the drift from the land and for the extensive daily commuting that exists between country and town.

The people have moved away but the countryside remains; the drift from it raises the question as to how certain rural areas are to remain viable. Below a certain population the provision and maintenance of collective infrastructure becomes impossible and rural areas disintegrate. The EEC is aware of this trend and has recently adopted directives for support to underprivileged agricultural areas (18 March 1975). Over the last ten years, however, the drift from the land has apparently lost momentum, or in some regions has even been halted. This process varies according to whether the rural areas in question are on the outskirts of major conurbations or whether they are at a greater distance from them.

In those rural areas situated at some distance from urban centres, there if often an apparent return to population balance but this frequently conceals a serious situation: the immigration of retired people offsets in the short-term the emigration of young people, but completely destroys the age pyramid and ultimately paves the way for the collapse of the rural population over an increasingly wide geographical area.

The importance of this development is neither clearly understood, nor when it is, clearly estimated. However, it is liable to increase the rate at which rural regions lose their vitality and population and it accentuates the imbalance in rural economic and social life.

While in some areas rural areas suffer from lack of infrastructure, urban areas are often liable to become stifled through an excess of infrastructure. The concentration of activities and people raises serious planning problems. With numerous defects in the fabric of town and city centres, the inhabitants go elsewhere. There is a danger that towns will no longer be for living but only for work and consumer activities.

There are a multiplicity of ways of accounting for rural decline. Urban concentration gives a number of advantages to consumers in the form of a wide range of goods and services. These extend personal choice. They are also attractive in the productive sector since the necessary factors for growth (diversified manpower, technical assistance etc) and markets are all present.

Towns and cities have a force of attraction throwing rural areas out of balance because they draw to them the main dynamic and mobile section of the population as a result of higher wages, a wider range of employment possibilities and greater variety.

This urban polarisation is increased because of the image of central areas as a place for governments, public offices and business headquarters as well as the centre of scientific and cultural creativity is socially acceptable.

The rural world is not only economically but also culturally dependent on the urban world. Those who live in the country, faced with a trend that they cannot control, are no longer aware of the numerous advantages to be derived from a renewal of their own world, and although the judgment passed on the city environment is negative they actually adopt that environment as their model for rural development. This dependence may result in a loss of cultural identity and an absence of collective schemes.

Not only do those who live in the country take urban dwellers as their cultural model, they also expect them to act as agents for their development. The local leaders who enjoy greater prestige are those considered capable of manipulating external power and wealth, ie that of the city and of the capital.

Equally paradoxical is the realisation by the urban disciples of Rousseau of the new and considerable potential offered by the countryside.

The economic patterns outlined above have damaging consequences and have long term social costs. If the quality of the urban environment is poor, the result is a greater consumption of goods intended to compensate for that poor quality and, hence, waster. In a rural environment the decline of economic and social activities makes it more difficult to organise collective life because amenities are under-used and have to be run at a loss.

Industrial and urban civilisation has become so gigantic, complex and inter-dependent that it has become dangerously vulnerable to the vicissitudes brought about by changes and crises. In an economic system that no longer guarantees continuous growth, the rural environment retains a real capacity for adjustment to new future forms of social and economic life.

The living conditions in the country in fact make it possible to some extent to lessen the monetary element in the economy and to secure advantages, goods and an equivalent quality of life for less money (without causing inflation) and hence a lesser dependence on consumer models because there is greater independence in the choice of these models and in non-economic activities (recreation etc).

The improvement of means of communication and mobility of persons produces new forms of participation and the rebirth of cultural creativity peculiar to the rural world.

b. <u>The system of metropolitan areas and main development axes</u>

The planning of rural areas cannot be undertaken in an isolated manner. Inter-action between town and country, between the concentration of man and his activities in an urban setting and the evolution of a way of life in rural areas, is becoming more marked. In this respect it is also necessary to look at the effect of metropolitan areas and development axes on regional development in Europe (see ppr. 10 and 11 for definition).

Regional development might best be efficiently planned if it is based, amongst other factors, on a structured, urban organisation characterised by the following features:

1. Decentralisation of the urban concentration of the population, housing, jobs and infrastructure in a differentiated, functional framework that has a graduated structure with the metropolitan areas;

2. The organisation of a network of linear axes linking the different concentration centres and ensuring an efficient exchange of services between them. At the top of the graduated structure of such axes are the main development axes.

Metropolitan areas and main development axes that join them are at the top of the functional, graduated urban structure. Their definition marks the first step in the concretisation of the centripetal tendencies that exist in Europe's urban system. This definition will also help to pinpoint the problems of rural areas whose development is without doubt encouraged by the existence of metropolitan areas and development axes.

The effect of metropolitan areas and main lines of development axes on rural areas can be both positive and negative.

Positive effects

These occur when metropolitan areas/centres develop particular characteristics and specialities in the field of services, industry, commerce, culture, education and communication. In this sense metropolitan areas conduct an exchange of services with rural areas and provide a commercial outlet for rural products.

Negative effects

Negative effects occur chiefly when development potential remains concentrated and is not decentralised at all levels of the graduated framework but remains principally confined to metropolitan areas and main development axes.

The danger with such process is that the concentration in metropolitan areas is reinforced and that rural areas lose much of their vitality through the absorption into metropolitan areas of population and capital.

Necessity for an alternative policy for rural development

Too often in the past the approach to regional planning policy has been unilateral.

However, in several countries an alternative policy has been urged by:

- campaigners who call for the protection of features specific to the rural environment through particular measures, rehabilitation of the rural environment by the provision and the maintenance of minimum facilities, the creation of steady jobs suitable for the rural population and by the stimulation of a rural housing policy;

- nature conservationists calling for measures to protect greenbelts and natural sites;

- ecologists concerned with the role of open spaces in maintaining environmental balance;

- town planners and developers who maintain that it is important to keep extensive spaces as outlets between conurbations;

- local populations (a factor of vital importance) which are anxious to have a hand in decisions that affect the destiny of the environment that they value.

What is thus being sought is a new balance between the aspirations of such groups and campaigners and the aspirations of those who wish upon rural regions new economic values based on new functions.

It is the responsibility of regional planners to overcome the difficulty and thorny problem of organising relations between the urban and the rural environment without sacrificing the specific features or potential of either.

1. THE FUNCTIONS AND PROBLEMS OF RURAL AREAS

1.1 Analysis of rural areas

1.1.1 Criteria and definitions

1. If rural areas are to be considered as territorial units with fairly homogeneous characteristics, countries tend to encounter some difficulty in their attempt to define geographical limits, on account of the great variety of possible criteria and definitions.

Socio-economic criteria are amongst the most important and are more widely used than ecological, aesthetic or scientific criteria.

2. Since highly complex regions are often involved, another suitable form of analysis is to look at functional and structural characteristics.

General criteria, such as population density and distribution or geomorphological structure, provide an overall but rather vague picture. Their specific features can only be revealed through a more detailed, mainly socio-economic approach, together with ecological and aesthetic data.

3. The Italian national reply states that "the term 'rural' describes not only a place where agricultural activities are performed, but, more generally, the site of activities and settlements of a non-intensive character. Intensity is measured not only in relation to the physical size of the settlement (density) but also in terms of the low degree of economic dynamism which, at the present stage of the productive process, distinguishes the mainly agricultural, peripheral areas, from the main urban development axes".

This definition is contested in the Swedish and German reports which consider the methods and structures of Swedish and German agriculture and forestry to be intensive activities, given the capital invested and the strain on the environment.

4. The physical aspect of open spaces appears only in countries with serious problems stemming from conurbations, and only within areas of urban influence. The population's demand for open spaces has green areas and recreation areas, is seldom discussed. In the Benelux countries, the overall calculation of these requirements forms the basis of a national regional planning policy. In the Scandinavian countries and the United Kingdom, the physical aspect exists in regional plans.

1.1.2 Functions at national levels

5. From the historic point of view, the farming function is the most important. Apart from primary production, it also shapes and maintains the evolving countryside. This traditional function includes rural housing, crafts and the agricultural industry.

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6. Since the industrial revolution, economic growth and material prosperity have released time and money for a large section of the population. There has been a tremendous upsurge in recreation, tourism and spare-time activities; an increasing proportion of this growth occurs in rural areas. The main tourist areas are already feeling the effects of this in the form of suburban development and the spread of second homes. This places a wide range of strains on the rural environment.

7. Since the post-industrial stage of development and the spread of urbanisation based on Europe's central axis, open spaces have become increasingly important. Particularly in the post-war period, the trend towards advanced suburbanisation and country urbanisation gave new significance to open spaces as an alternative framework for life.

The ecological movement and the search for new life styles, aiming at well-being rather than economic growth, have given a new substance to rural areas.

In the heart of Europe, where the population is beginning to feel the disadvantages of excessive urbanisation and the damage caused by the development of megalopolises, these functions are even beginning to supplant the farming factor. Emphasis is placed on the social, scientific and aesthetic value of open spaces. The campaign against pollution in urban areas has led to a reappraisal of existing stocks of clean water, clean air and open ground. Rural areas provide a major counterbalance, making it possible to redress the ecological balance distorted by metropolitan areas.

8. Rural areas have a multitude of sites of outstanding biological geographical, aesthetic or scientific value. The preservation of these sites in their original state is a matter of major importance for future generations.

1.1.3 Identification of rural areas of European importance

9. The data provided by different countries is too varied to permit a uniform identification of rural areas of European importance. Different approaches must be used.

A hypothetical typology of rural spaces on a European scale could use the following criteria:

- importance of "open" zones in terms of area or extent;
- functions that certain rural areas serve on a European scale;
- functions of rural areas in relation to built-up areas and metropolitan growing axes.

This list is only indicative; it does not pretend to be exhaustive.

a. Open spaces of intercontinental significance

These are the open spaces which separate Europe from other continents: those bordering on the Arctic, the Atlantic Ocean and the open space situated between the European continent and Africa in the Mediterranean region.

Although such a view may appear too large for European planning, we feel that it is important to take account from the start of a much broader concept and to prepare guidelines for an integrated plan covering all European lands and seas.

b. Open spaces of continental or European significance

A sub-division of this category could be open terrestrial spaces, such as the northern part of the Scandinavian countries and the northern part of the British Isles: the south of Italy, part of the Balkans and the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the eastern part of Turkey.

Marine open spaces of continental significance could include areas whose functions are directly connected with European land activities, such as the North Sea, the Baltic, the Bay of Biscay and stretches of the Mediterranean, themselves directly connected with activities along the Mediterranean.

c. Open spaces with an intermegalopolitan significance and function. For instance, the Alpine chain, which serves as a buffer between the megalopolitan areas of north-west Europe and southern Europe, while the Straits of Dover fulfil the same function between the British and continental sides of the north-west European megalopolis.

d. Open spaces of megalopolitan significance

Within the north-west European megalopolis, these include the Ardennes in Belgium and Luxembourg, the Eifel region and the rural regions of north-eastern France, the northern part of the Netherlands and the rural area of north-west Germany in Schleswig-Holstein.

If the same criteria are applied to the megalopolitan areas of southern Europe, the same functions could be ascribed to the Apennines, the Massif Central and the Pyrenees.

e. Other open spaces of some importance at European level

These are national or transfrontier rural open spaces of a certain size separating metropolitan areas. Numerous examples could be mentioned, for instance the Black Forest, the Eifel and the Ardennes, and the Dutch and Belgian Campine.

f. Intrametropolitan open spaces

These include the green belts around big towns in the United Kingdom, the central part of the Randstad Holland, the "Grünflächen" in the Ruhr etc.

1.1.4 European functions

10. The northern European open space in the Scandinavian countries is undoubtedly one of the major forest reserves of Europe. Apart from its ecological, recreational, touristic and landscape role, its forestry function has its own specificity and is vital to the whole of Europe.

11. The Alpine Chain, as an open space of intermegalopolitan significance, the Apennines, the Massif Central and the Dinaric Alps in south-eastern Europe have more differentiated functions, either more or less specific depending on their relations with urbanisation.

The Alpine Chain, for instance, has become an area of recreation and mass tourism (winter sports), and mountain farming is being increasingly replaced by recreation and tourism, second homes and other open space requirements of the surrounding megalopolitan regions. The same applies to the Pyrenees, the Dinaric Alps, etc, which are further removed from the centre of gravity of the central European megalopolitan axis.

12. The Mediterranean coastline serves amongst others international and even inter-continental functions of relaxation, tourism and recreation. The Mediterranean basin is also of outstanding historical scientific and ecological importance.

13. The open spaces of coastal regions of Europe provide several examples of rural areas threatened by certain major industrial-port areas. These in addition to being zones of maritime transport and fishing, are being transformed into areas of heavy industry and increasingly assorted activities.

The impact on marine ecology and environment, which is frequently tragic and always dangerous in the long term, goes far beyond national considerations, for example, catastrophes caused by oil pollution from tankers and from drilling platforms, etc.

14. Energy production is a transfrontier function in high mountain areas causing additional and sometimes crucial demands on the countryside and planning of the rural areas involved.

15. All the Atlantic coastline is increasingly developing into a recreation and tourist area for Europeans as a whole. The Scandinavian countries are experiencing substantial development in the sector of tourism and recreation, second homes and recreation areas. Their attraction for tourists from the countries of central western Eruope has increased considerably.

Owing to the expanse of coastline and geographical structure of the Scandinavian peninsula, the limits are far from having been reached, and there is still vast scope for development in the tourist and recreation sector.

1.2 ANALYSIS OF METROPOLITAN AREAS AND MAIN LINES OF COMMUNICATION

1.2.1 Definition

1. Metropolitan areas and main development axes form an integral part of the structure of the territory, based on localised axial development. The principal components in this structure are local centres and the communication lines between them. Each of the two components, although organised in accordance with a graduated structure, constitutes, with their zones of influence and attraction a functional unit.

No standard classification of the different levels in this structure has yet been worked out in all European countries, since the local centres and axes in some parts of Europe are different in size. Although all countries do not by any means practise such a graduation structure, it has nonetheless been possible to classify local centres and axes in a highly simplified five-level scale, allowing for the differences existing in regional terms.

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Level	Local centre	Sphere of attraction and influence	Axes
1	Metropolitan area (Euro-centre)	Over several large local centres	A main development axis
2	Large local centre	Over several medium local centres	Of major importance
3	Medium local centre	Over several small local centres	Of medium importance (regional)
4	Small local centre	Over several small local centres	Of minor importance
5	Small local centre (village)	Very localised	Of local importance

2. This territorial structure, based on the localised axial system, whose organisation is founded on the principles of division of labour, provides a strategic guideline by means of which the urban structure can be decentralised. Establishments in the tertiary economic sector and partly too the secondary sector are in this way situated in a decentralised manner at different local centres according to the infrastructure quality. The exchange of services between local centres of the same size and of different size is guaranteed by the axial system.

Under this system, metropolitan areas are provided with an infrastructure of European significance which is connected with internal main lines of development.

Because metropolitan areas and development axes considered as regional planning factors, have not always been defined in the same way by all countries, an attempt should be made to harmonise the concepts.

3a. A metropolitan area is a centre of European importance, representing the top level in the hierarchy of urban structures, combining high quality infrastructure with regional supply and access functions in the context of a Europe-wide exchange of services. It must meet the following minimum requirements:

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- a national or regional government function in a national or regional capital, and a supranational economic function of some importance;

- a minimum population and employment density to ensure its drawing power as a metropolitan area (a general minimum of 200,000 inhabitants, including suburbs);

- links with one or more main developments or arteries of a high order;

- periodical international fairs, congresses and important cultural events, as well as international institutions and businesses. This criterion reinforces the role of metropolitan areas but it is not indispensible.

3b. A main axis is a linear axis of communication, development and concentration of European importance having a high population and building density at its junction. Naturally, for the purposes of the report a definition excludes maritime and air communications. Main development axes represent the top level in the network of arteries, which follows a hierarchical pattern whose metropolitan areas constitute the junctions. Its characteristic features are:

- high quality, consolidated linear infrastructure; a rapid European transport system fulfilling the communication and exploitation function through the exchange of goods and services;

- links with regionally important urban centres of varying size.

In addition to their role in promoting integration amongst countries and neighbouring regions, main development axes in their role as European axes have the four following functions:

1. Intensification of the exchange of goods and services between metropolitan areas (liaison function);

2. Improvement of accessibility and communication in and for all regions (organisation function);

3. Stimulus to urban development in the form of axes with the aim of:

   a. promoting the linear extension of metropolitan areas (concentration function),

   b. reinforcing and guiding development potential to the junctions situated on development axes (development function);

4. Protection and conservation of open spaces between development axes (protection function).

1.2.2 Survey and functions of national and European metropolitan areas and main development axes

4. The survey of metropolitan areas in Council of Europe member countries is an essential basis for the development of ideas concerning the structure and regional planning of Europe.

The results and analysis of this survey are to be found in Appendix II. They are also shown on the map of "Metropolitan areas and main development axes in Europe".

The survey of metropolitan areas and main development axes is limited to noting their present state of development. Planning objectives for the future or possible conditions related to the completion of plans and programmes have not been taken into consideration.

This survey shows that all European countries with the exception of the small island states have metropolitan areas and main development axes linking them together, but that the density of the networks and the state of their development vary widely.

In the national reports on the analysis of metropolitan areas and main development axes, there is a considerable lack of information regarding the functions that these two features of regional planning should perform.

In addition the negative effects of concentration are to be observed in almost all metropolitan areas, particularly in the fields of the environment, of transport, of the quality of the environment in the immediate proximity of housing areas, of the property market and of infrastructure (overloaded or saturated infrastructure). The progressive deterioration of ecological quality is a particularly grave danger.

5. Central Europe has the densest network of interdependent metropolitan areas and development axes extended towards the north-west. It encompasses approximately 150 million people in Austria, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France (north, north-east, east and south-east) Italy (north), Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In this area, the main European axis stretching from Italy to Britain, (IT-BRIT) has grown up with a population of over 50 million. Between south-east England where it begins (focal point London) and northern Italy where it ends (focal point Milan) it forms a wide corridor through the southern Netherlands (focal point Randstad Holland) up to the Rhine (focal points Rhine-Ruhr, Rhine-Main, Rhine-Neckar) past Stuttgart and finally the Alps. Further axes, some crossing the central one, and some parallel, have also developed, with important metropolitan areas such as Paris, Birmingham, Hamburg, Marseilles, Munich and Vienna, and also West Berlin in its insular position.

6. Around this densely populated part of central Europe there is a band of territory which is predominantly rural in character and which has somewhat less infrastructure than the regions listed above, under (5). This includes: Denmark, Finland (south), France (west and south-east), Greece (north-east and east), United Kingdom (south-west and centre), Italy (central and south), Yugoslavia (north and east), Norway (south-east and south-west), Portugal (south), Spain (central, south, east and north-west), Sweden (south) and Turkey (north-west).

7. The major portion of the peripheral territories of Europe remain untouched by the development axes. They include: Corsica and north-western France, Cyprus, Finland, the west, south and islands of Greece, Greenland (Denmark), Iceland, Ireland, Malta, central and northern Norway, northern Portugal, north-western Spain, central and northern Sweden, central, northern, eastern and southern Turkey and Yugoslavia.

8. This survey of metropolitan areas and main development axes in Europe and their classification into the above three categories of development and population density, are an essential base for the development of a concept of the European territorial structures. The survey also shows the development discrepancies between different areas of Europe.

9. Regional differences in the distribution of metropolitan areas and development axes (necessity of dividing them up into three density zones) as well as the typological classification of rural regions (into four types according to geographical criteria) indicate that all the regions cannot be covered by one single European concept for regional planning (as is the case, for example, with the system of development by poles and axes) but that it is necessary to draw up differentiated systems adapted to the specific requirements of regions.

1.3 PROBLEMS OF RURAL AREAS WITHIN AN OVERALL REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

1.3.1 The effects of the network of metropolitan areas and development development axes on rural areas

1. It is the system of spatial organisation based on the principle of localised axial development with metropolitan areas and development with metropolitan areas and development axes constituting the top level of the hierarchy, which has spread throughout central Europe. The outer limit of this part of Europe and the land between metropolitan areas and the axes have extensive residual areas of countryside where urbanisation must be avoided, as far as possible.

In this part of Europe, the main development axes have an important concentration function in that they promote linear development as against sprawling development while enabling open spaces to be preserved for the ecological balance and relaxation and preventing the uncontrolled defacement of the countryside (organising function).

2. Central Europe is surrounded by areas with a mainly rural structure with fairly few metropolitan areas and development axes. These rural areas include land which, owing to its natural conformation (eg the Alps), form a barrier to uninterrupted urbanisation. If the method of axial development potential and the principle of decentralisation of development potential are applied in these areas of low population, the mobile population and investment representing the development potential can be directed towards junctions as against sprawling development on the development axes (development function). This should check the drift of development potential from rural to metropolitan areas. In regions which form natural barriers, the functions of organisation and liaison are also important.

3. Many peripheral coastal regions are not well provided with metropolitan areas or development axes and an infrastructure is just being established. The development functions of existing metropolitan areas are generally limited to the functions of a regional capital. Existing axes help, within the linear infrastructure, to strengthen the exchange of services with neighbouring metropolitan areas. They fulfil not only a liaison function but also a development function making it possible to improve communications and access to peripheral regions.

4. In regions with a low or static population density, eg northern Europe where there is an adequate infrastructure and a high income level, the development of metropolitan areas and development axes cannot be encouraged without triggering an absorption effect, endangering the stability of rural areas.

5. The situation is different, however, in regions which have an increasing population density, a low income level and an inadequate infrastructure (for example, some regions in southern Europe). In these regions, development, concentration and organisation are the most important functions of the metropolitan areas and development axes.

1.3.2 The specific problems of rural areas

6. For a detailed analysis of the problems of rural areas at national level, see Appendix I.

7. For European countries, it is essential to consider town and country as a whole, with complementary functions, and that equally, regional economic balance is based on all regions, including rural.

From the second part of the last century onwards, the rural areas of Europe have experienced the socio-economic phenomenon of surplus manpower in the farming sector.

The enormous and unexpected scale of this surplus, together with the lack of alternative employment possibilities, have led to major migration movements.

Only the countries of the north and central western Europe were able to contain this moving mass of population, taken up by industrialisation, then in full swing.

Although this trend has led to the formation of megalopolises, and although it has entailed major social upheavals, it has finally culminated in a period of considerable prosperity. People living in these urbanised and industrialised zones are among the few inhabitants of the world who can afford the luxury of challenging their working and life environment, and expressing this challenge in political terms.

The other regions, and in particular the major peripheral regions of Europe, are attempting to provide valid alternatives for the population obliged to leave the farming sector. They have lost a large part of their population, eg Ireland, southern Italy, high mountain regions. This process of emigration is still continuing in the countries of south-eastern Europe (eg Turkey).

This is at the root of the current major controversies about rural areas in Europe.

8. Taking as a basis that most characteristic features, the problems of rural areas can be divided into two main groups:

i. The socio-economic problems, when the problems of rural areas are essentially those of regional balance.

The socio-economic backwardness of these rural areas, compared with urban areas, has become so great that governments have been obliged to take measures to limit the effects of urban attraction.

A mono-economic structure, essentially orientated towards the primary sector, has led to excessive emigration. A continually falling population has not only contributed to the backwardness of farming regions, but above all it has caused a deterioration in socio-cultural facilities, infrastructure and economic investments. Socio-economic problems are still found in all the peripheral areas of Europe.

The causes are complex, but they can be grouped into three categories:

- special climatic conditions, an extra burden for the farming sector or for the local population;

- the geomorphology (eg mountain regions are always economically disadvantaged);

- an eccentric position in relation to the major poles or axes of economic growth; bad or difficult communications with the growth centres have always proved to affect adversely socio-economic development.

ii. Ecological problems, whenever the problems of rural areas relate more particularly to the preservation of nature and green belts, to the safeguarding of exceptional landscapes and to the protection of open spaces against the pressure of urban areas.

An excessive concentration of people and socio-economic activities can produce a return to the rural environment, after endangering the social and ecological balance of rural areas.

9. In most European countries, these problems are combined. Frequently, one is found in opposition to another and conflicts of priority are increasingly common.

10. The problems of rural areas vary in Europe according to geographical area:

A distinction may be made between:

- the Scandinavian peninsula;

- central western Europe;

- high mountain regions;

- Mediterranean countries.

11. The Scandinavian peninsula

Traditionally sparsely populated, with harsh climatic conditions, the bulk of these rural areas have Europe's largest forest reserve.

They have not resisted the attraction of urban areas, situated further south and enjoying a milder climate, which have achieved great prosperity thanks to the diversification of economic activities.

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However, the economic development of these peripheral areas has grown considerably. The structure of the primary sector is far superior to that of the other great peripheral regions of Europe. The production of hydro-electric energy has given rise, locally, to industrialisation although this sometimes has difficulties in surviving.

The Nordic regions, which enjoy a stable and well-balanced national economy have a highly developed tourist and recreation sector. As the reports of the Scandinavian countries stress, these regions offer numerous possibilities, some of which have for several years been incorporated in regional development policies. This has reached such a pitch that, in some areas, stricter physical planning measures for the protection of nature are necessary.

12. Central western Europe

Ever since the last century, considerable migratory movements have taken place in the main river systems, coastal regions, and especially the delta regions, where industrialisation and urbanisation have taken hold. In Atlantic Europe, this concentration of people and activities has culminated in the development of megalopolises.

Consequently, the open spaces situated between London and the Ruhr, Copenhagen and Paris are diminishing daily, and are on the point of disappearing. Countries like the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany have major ecological problems. The continual overflow of urban activities into the countryside is a threat to open spaces. The city population's growing demand for recreation areas places the last remaining stretches of countryside in jeopardy.

However, with the exception of the most central area, the rural areas of the centrally located countries of Europe are also affected by socio-economic problems such as emigration, insufficient growth rate and imbalanced economic structure.

The relative importance of these problems varies depending on whether the rural area is situated within an area of urban influence or in an area more remote from this direct attraction, but the basic problem of regional balance is always present.

This mixture of areas is well illustrated in France. The process of depopulation of the countryside has been aggravated in France by a determined policy of development of regional metropolitan areas. This has resulted in a very low population density in a high proportion of French rural areas, unparalleled in any other centrally located country.

The United Kingdom also combines both problems. It is especially the peripheral areas, which are affected by the problem of socio-economic decline, that cannot prevent the pressure of urbanisation from growing in the vicinity of urban areas. This produces conflict between the various possible forms of land use.

The Federal Republic of Germany is also affected by this problem in the Eastern frontier areas, which have not shared in the post-war economic growth.

13. High mountain areas: high mountain rural areas are a special case. The most typical examples are in the Alpine and Pyrenean countries.

The farming sector in these regions is frequently in difficulty - abandonment of arable land, reduction in the number of farms, decrease in manpower, deterioration of housing conditions.

The trend to increased productivity in the primary sector by means of up-to-date farming structures is hampered by geomorphological and climatic conditions. However, these rural areas serve multiple purposes, and are subject to complex land use demands.

The need to preserve this outstanding natural environment, and to protect countryside and scenery, is confronted with a growing demand from the urban population, who want to use the land for recreation, leisure activities and second homes.

Yet another problem is hydro-electric energy production, resulting in considerable modification of the countryside.

14. Mediterranean countries

Mediterranean Europe, including Portugal, Spain, southern Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey, provide many examples of the predominantly socio-economic range of problems.

The lack of socio-economic balance in these rural areas is further aggravated because the national economy frequently lags substantially behind the economies of other western European countries.

The primary sector still occupies a major place in the socio-economic structure of Mediterranean countries and is potentially invaluable for these areas.

The development of the tourist, recreation and leisure-time activity sector has led to forms of urbanisation along the coastline that threaten the existence of the fundamental values of the Mediterranean landscape.

Whilst this process is still in its early stages in Turkey, it has been under way for 30 years in the southern part of Italy.

2. OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING AND PLANNING RURAL AREAS

2.1 National and European objectives

2.1.1 For metropolitan areas and main development axes

1. As well as an inventory and description of the function of metropolitan areas and development axes, it is necessary to draw up a list of national objectives and strategies, if an overall picture of regional planning is to be gained.

2. It is also necessary to indicate the positive and negative effect that metropolitan areas and development axes can have on rural areas, and deduce therefrom the strategic functions to be ascribed to these two factors within a European regional planning policy.

3. The survey and analysis of national regional plans show that objectives and measures are not yet directed towards European needs but they they are generally intended to serve national interests. This makes it difficult to compare data. However, all policies for national development reflect a fairly uniform trend. Their purpose is:

- to combat the adverse consequences of urban concentration;
- to limit the pressure of immigration on urban centres;
- to slow down rural depopulation and strengthen the structure of rural areas;
- to reduce disparities, especially in underdeveloped regions.

4. The questionnaire sent out to delegations first revealed that in most countries the system of localised axial urban planning is not applied directly in regional planning policy, although the policy does incorporate the local centres - occasionally involving the establishment of metropolitan areas - and although the components of development axes - including the main ones - are being developed; however they are neither designated as such nor used as an axial framework in connection with the system of local centres.

5. The concepts of regional planning represented by metropolitan areas and development axes are applied in different ways in the various countries, but the components of these factors are defined in regional planning policy in all countries.

6. The decentralisation of the urban fabric which has proved necessary in Europe is compatible with a regional planning system based on localised axial development. It is even safe to say that with the aid of centres and axes, decentralisation has every chance of being realised. The decentralisation of concentration is designed to halt an increasing extension of major urban zones, including metropolitan areas and development axes, and to divert the development potential towards local centres and axes situated further down in the graduated structure, ie towards rural areas. The measure is thus part of a restrictive policy against metropolitan areas and axes. In a number of states the limits of tolerable growth have even been expressed in precise figures, so as to ensure greater decentralisation of population growth. A territorial structure based on the localised axial system is an appropriate supra-regional link for different zones.

7. The territorial structure based on the localised axial system provides a means of control, both for rural areas and highly concentrated urban zones, whereby it is possible to encourage the positive effects and to lessen if not eliminate the negative effects of the trend.

8. In states having applied a regional planning system based directly, partially or, in a modified form, on localised axial development, the following positive effects have been noted:

- gradual reduction of infrastructure imbalance;
- successful exchange of services over long distances and improvement of communications;
- integration of peripheral regions within the exchange of services over long distances;
- encouragement to industry and commerce;
- improved access to recreation and relaxation areas; encouragement of the growth of such areas;
- the encouragement of development centres situated on communication axes, contributing to a better territorial structure;
- encouragement of decentralisation within highly concentrated areas to the benefit of rural areas, for which those trends represent a latent development potential.

9. It would be wrong, however, to overlook the negative effects:

- in a regional planning system based on localised axial development the deficit in infrastructure facilities would have to be offset by high transport costs;
- axes might heighten the disparities between rural areas and local centres situated high up in the graduated structure, and so help encourage the drift from the land;
- the need to construct communication lines is not often especially urgent in rural areas, since the basic conditions and needs are not yet sufficiently developed;
- communication axes guarantee the exchange of services between the zones of urban concentration themselves, and only to a lesser extent an exchange with rural areas.

10. This juxtaposition of the positive and negative effects likely to result from the general pattern can be used to work out strategies to encourage desirable effects for rural areas, metropolitan areas and main development axes, and to circumvent the effects that are undesirable.

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2.1.2 For rural areas

11. For the analysis of national objectives, see Appendix I.

12. Analysis of current European objectives

The aim of any regional development policy is regional equilibrium and equality of opportunity for all, achieved by a harmonious spread of population, activities and resources, ie a balancing of income (socio-economic), available infrastructure and amenities.

Consequently, one of the prime objectives in most European countries at present is the development of rural regions and the decongestion of towns.

13. In rural regions overshadowed by towns, the wish to protect open spaces accompanies and sometimes replaces the aim of developing the infrastructure and agriculture. For that reason, a number of countries have given the following objectives high priority:

- nature conservation;
- the protection of the aesthetic value of landscapes;
- the creation of national parks and nature reserves;
- pollution control;
- the preparation of tourist and recreational areas;
- strict planning rules concerning second homes.

14. Development is the main objective in some rural areas situated not directly in the sphere of influence of major urban zones, particularly peripheral zones. In most cases, development is planned by means of intensive industrialisation based on the model of growth centres. The flow of the population from rural areas to towns is often considered inevitable up to a certain level.

15. This strategy of growth centres applied in areas with intensive activities and structures or with a rapid socio-economic development, has proved less beneficial in rural areas because an agricultural economy can rarely counteract the pull of the large towns where investment and productivity levels are completely different.

Italy has therefore revised its development policy, after 30 years of trying to develop the Mezzogiorno by improving the functions of several growth centres. The aim now is to use an integral system of regional planning directives to remedy the isolation of certain regions in the interior of the country without upsetting the delicate balance of the rural world.

Greece is also following a policy of regional development based on local centres serving smaller rural areas.

16. In most of the Scandinavian countries, Nordic regional development requires a combination of rural industries backed up by national resources such as capital and technical skills. The main objective is in fact a fair and balanced distribution of employment, housing, and services and the reorganisation of land use. One very important objective has been the reclamation of agricultural land abandoned in order to extend forestry, so as to open new ecological and economic prospects. However, this objective is becoming less important because the abandonment of arable land is about to be completely halted.

These countries are also working out important ecological aims: nature conservation, the preservation of open spaces, the organisation of land use.

17. A more detailed study of national objectives shows that ecological aims are increasingly being adopted in peripheral regions.

18. This development is accounted for mainly by the fairly recent growth of the leisure, recreation and tourism sector which has considerable effects on land use and regional structures.

Although this sector is generally regarded as a dynamic factor in regional developments and a source of income, there are mixed feelings about its effects on land use. The city dweller's "return to nature" is in fact a new source of tension in the rural environment. Consequently objectives are being worked out for regional organisation and the protection of certain exceptional areas.

19. There has been a fundamental change in policy in the Mediterranean world, in order to tackle obvious ecological problems.

20. The countries of the Alpine chain constitute a special case. Most of these regions fulfil a very definite, supranational touristic and recreational function, besides serving as important energy producers. As these countries have also developed substantial urbanised axes in the major valleys, they have a wide variety of spatial objectives, directed towards a policy of small-scale development applied to small territorial units.

2.2 CONCERTED EUROPEAN STRATEGIES

2.2.1 For metropolitan areas and main development axes

1. There are two categories of policies open to the countries of Europe to attain regional planning objectives. Depending on the objective, these measures are either of a stimulative or a restrictive nature, or they are policies designed to prevent certain development tendencies.

2. I. Measures designed to influence and improve the conditions governing, for the individual, choices of housing and site and for the business world, choices governing the level of investment and implantation site.

1. General measures

a. construction and extension of university establishments, special schools, occupational training centres, cultural centres, hospitals;

b. creation of supraregional means of transport and communication (motorways, railways, inland waterways, airports, telephone networks etc);

c. commercial and agricultural facilities;

d. creation of jobs in public services;

e. the award of public works contracts.

2. Financial measures

a. aids to industrial location as part of improvements to the regional economic structure;

b. investment subsidies;

c. housing aids (renewal of buildings, improvement schemes etc);

d. aids to mobility;

e. aids for transport;

f. fiscal relief.

3. II. Measures of a restrictive nature designed to control investment and choice of location for businesses and housing if these decisions do not conform to the objectives determined as part of a regional planning policy.

1. Measures concerning environmental protection (against air, water and noise pollution);

2. Measures for the protection of nature and landscapes;

3. Measures for the protection of the architectural heritage;

4. Measures for preventing over-concentration of built-up areas (central Europe) thus enabling existing open spaces to be preserved;

5. The protection of open spaces for areas which help provide an ecological balance.

III. There are additional measures intended to encourage certain decisions or provide information on the advantages and disadvantages arising from the choice of housing, siting of firms or the level of investment.

The following table presents the above range of measures as applied to different types of regions in Europe.

REGIONAL POLICIES ACCORDING TO REGIONS

Types of region / Measures see p. 21	Regions of high urban concentration - Central Europe - (1)	Rural areas surrounding Central Europe (2)	Peripheral regions characterised by: decreasing / low / high / adequate — (3)	Peripheral regions characterised by: increasing / relatively high / low / inadequate — (4)
I.1 a. b. c.	Stimulative measures only to be encouraged in certain cases such as replacement investment or to make good infrastructural shortcomings	To be developed according to need	Only to be developed for replacement investment or to make good infrastructural shortcomings	Considerable intensification of development
d. e.	Restriction	Intensification	(3)	(4)
a.		According to need		To be given favoured treatment
b.	Restriction		Restriction	
c.			Limitation	To be applied
d.	Limitation	To be applied restrictively		generously
e.	Restriction		Suppression	
f.				
II.	1; 2; 3; 4; 5;	1; 2; 3; 5;	1; 2; 3; 5;	1; 2; 3; 5;

1. The development of metropolitan areas and main development axes in these areas that have an adequate degree of development should not exceed the average development of the country or of the sector in which the areas are situated.

2. The development of metropolitan areas and main development axes should be taken to a point which permits them to fully carry out their functions and to guarantee the exchange of services with rural areas and their local centres.

3. The development of axes and metropolitan areas should not endanger the delicate balance of rural areas surrounding them by encouraging the rural population to move away.

4. An abrupt intensification of development is liable to result in a stagnation of the evolution of rural areas and their centres.

2.2.2 For rural areas

5. An analysis of the measures, instruments and administrative structures for the implementation of policy on rural areas appears as Appendix I.

6. Over the last 30 years, most countries have developed regional economic policies in order to achieve the objective of regional balance.

This policy first tried to create alternative industrial jobs.

The industrialisation of declining regions was generally based on the strategy of localised axial growth.

Most countries designated areas to receive national or regional aid, with a system of subsidies attracting or even providing development.

These policies, backed up by policies for new roads, housing and social amenities, were aimed above all for many countries at regional metropolitan areas.

7. Most countries found that these strategies had adverse results on rural areas, whose delicate balance cannot withstand the pull of urban areas. Of course it has been possible to re-route and disperse major migratory movements, but rural areas themselves do not seem to have succeeded in being developed by such strategies.

It is noted for France that the results of a policy of "métropoles d'équilibre" are not always positive.

Italy is questioning the regional policy carried out in the Mezzogiorno.

Greece is also noting certain negative effects of the policy of development axes.

8. In contrast, the Scandinavian countries are pursuing a policy of balance, centred on rural areas' own capacities, that is to say primary production, tourism and recreation and in some cases the production of energy, crafts and the bio-industry, and have concentrated on investment in sectors such as housing, social services and the possibility of achieving an income level comparable to that in urban areas.

The promotion of jobs in manufacturing industries has also played an important role in rural development.

9. The development of the agricultural sector is a top priority in the Mediterranean countries where there are still densely populated agricultural areas where the drift from the land continues.

Structural reforms have been carried out in Italy and Spain and are being tried out in Portugal.

The modernisation of farms and water supply engineering will in the long term increase rural depopulation.

These countries are banking on the development of tourism, recreation and leisure as supplementary activities to create alternative employment.

10. In the countries of central and western Europe where open spaces between towns are threatened by the spread of megalopolises and where a fairly advanced agricultural sector has seen the worst of the drift from the land, strategies on protection and organising land prevail.

Extreme measures are even taken as part of restrictive regional policies to limit the expansion of urban areas. Some examples are:

- decentralisation policies in England and France to limit the growth of London and Paris;

- the policy of "gebundelde deconcentratie" which has been carried out for 10 years now on a national scale by the Dutch authorities to relieve congestion in the west - the "Randstad Holland";

- the sectoral planning policy in Belgium in which land use is governed by 10-year plans. In Flanders especially, the main objective is to protect the remaining open spaces.

11. In the small countries of central Europe, ie Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, where distances are small, where rural and urban areas have already been integrated to a certain extent and have achieved a measure of balance, the main strategy is integrated and fairly strict regional planning, protecting rural areas against sub-urbanisation and the excessive expansion of urban areas.

12. In the larger countries, like the United Kingdom, France and Germany, nature conservation, the establishment of nature reserves and the preservation of areas of outstanding beauty are very important.

Development strategies for peripheral areas and also being implemented more and more by policies for protection and organising land.

Indeed, all open spaces are being used increasingly for leisure and recreation.

The impact of tourism on land use in major tourist areas like the Mediterranean coast and the Alpine chain obliges countries to develop suitable strategies for protecting the natural and architectural heritage without impairing the dynamic effect of the development of the tourist sector.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

Proposal for guidelines specific to rural areas

1. The centralised system has failed to resolve current problems in society. This fact, plus the need to lessen regional imbalances, argues for policies with greater emphasis on rural areas.

2. It is important to arrive at a concept of rural planning and development dynamics which differ from the traditional planning based on the relationship between town and countryside.

3. One question that should be asked is whether a structure of national or international zones based on regional metropolitan areas, axes and development centres may not be pursuing the interests of centralised states rather than those of a genuine development of regional societies.

4. Although having a number of positive aspects, this policy does in fact almost automatically block new components in the regional fabric, having so far succeeded in surviving or even thriving on the basis of a historic network deriving its balance from local relationships. Those regions are threatened with a new alienation through the reinforcement of predominant linear structures or points.

Population

5. Whilst the sole prospect in general for the rural population is to move away, it is important to state social finalities whereby a population cannot be moved around or exploited at will. This is a political view of social evolution and no longer a technical subservience to prevailing forces.

6. Even rural areas which are close to large centres can no longer be regarded solely as "dormitory" regions, or places for owners of second homes, whose participation in local affairs is negligible. It will also be noted that the creation of new centres may increase migration, so that the region is further robbed of its substance.

ACTIVITIES

7.a. There must be maximum protection for primary activities.

Agriculture and forest areas can no longer be regarded as reserves on which to draw as and when supposed needs arise. Rather they are to be seen as the working tools of a production that is necessary in both regional and European terms.

In co-ordinating action, an attempt must be made to retain a balance between zones to be exploited and the rural habitat, which traditionally ensures that those areas continue to be worked and regularly maintained. The loss of substance of primary activities has unfortunately not yet ended and industrial non-compensation for that loss in the region or sub-region is still very often the predominant reality of rural planning.

b. Industrialisation of rural areas

8. A number of strategies for industrialisation can be developed:

- Peripheral and under-developed rural areas, losing their population and resources, need an elementary industry which is close to the rural environment and does not need at the outset a highly qualified labour force. One of the most effective possibilities is provided by the bio-industry, on condition that such industry does not cause pollution.

  Another source of employement in rural areas can be afforded by the implantation of industries of "high added value" which are not bound by localisation factors. Such industries can employ engineers and technicians that are attracted to the area by the cadence of life and locally recruited personnel which the industries concerned have the time to train, given the stability of the population;

- Rural zones which are close to major conurbations stand to gain from the overflow from urban areas. It is essential to adopt a strict and vigorous land use policy to prevent ruinous sub-urbanisation.

- When the rural zone has an urban infrastructure that is sufficiently developed, industry has recourse to sophisticated technology and a highly qualified labour force. It is possible to practise a policy of attracting executives and qualified staff to centres situated in rural areas, with the hope of bringing in the tertiary sector - a considerable source of jobs. If the rural area already attracts the urban population and if sub-urbanisation or any form of new establishment has already begun, this strategy is particularly to be recommended, since in this case the environment is agreeable enough to exercise a force of attraction, especially since industries that are well planned and on a small scale will also be productive of jobs.

9. The rural environment can and must receive its share of industry. It has incidentally been shown that the policy of industrialising rural areas has deflationary effects which counter inflationary pressures stemming from excessive concentration and specialisation.

A policy of this kind can only be put through, however, if attitudes are profoundly changed.

The indigenous rural population should accept a range of activities which should be officially encouraged, provided that that range is entirely in keeping with local resources.

10. All too often the rural environment is prey to the ideological barriers imposed by an élite society. It is this society which is basically responsible for a certain immobility that emerges every time a new solution is devised which is liable to disturb the status quo, the more forcibly when the region counts amont its inhabitants a large proportion of old or inactive persons. Only too frequently specious arguments concerning "quality of life" and based on "respectable" opinions compromise the future of the new generations.

Furthermore it is possible that a certain regional dynamism stems from a tiny fraction of the population which is anxious to confirm its dominance.

It is up to country dwellers themselves, in this as in other areas, to assume their destiny and to assume it jointly.

c. Development of the tertiary sector

11. The growing part played by the tertiary sector in the process of urban development heightens still further the discrepancy between conditions of living and employment in towns and those in the countryside. Although no one would wish to bring the same range of services into the rural environment, it is nonetheless clearly essential to ensure that country people have access to a maximum range of services, including satisfactory socio-cultural facilities, and have access to them without having to cover or spend excessive amounts of time in covering unacceptable distances.

In the tertiary sector, it would seem appropriate to reserve a special place for tourism, which will also have to be referred to under the heading of conservation of rural areas.

12. Whatever the potential of a rural environment for tourist development, this activity is one that, while not secondary, must only be complementary to other activities, in the interest of regional balance. Tourist development should as far as possible be integrated into the rural areas.

13. The tertiary sector also has a considerable role to play in job creation and in stimulating recovery.

d. Communications

14. It is not enough to undertake a policy of opening up rural areas with development centres or axes. It is important also to improve internal relations within the region. These relations make for cohesion and dictate certain patterns of solidarity among local people, as well as a genuine determination to feel responsible for the region.

In contrast, the establishment of high speed routes towards major centres across the intermediary region is frequently damaging to regional structures.

The development and improvement of regional transport and communication, and greater spread of the internal network enable the population to be more mobile within the regional area.

e. Environment, conservation of natural and architectural assets

15. Rural areas have an important landscape function which is just as important as their exploitation.

16. It is essential, if we are to safeguard a living environment of high quality, to impose strict rules against the thoughtless use of certain assets that are all too quickly exhausted or depleted. Only through the observance of these rules will it be possible for mankind to strike a balance between nature's resources and its requirements.

17. The pattern of rural living needs to be maintained as an alternative to the urban pattern of living. The conservation of open spaces in their entirety is necessary for the prevention of uncontrolled growth on the outskirts of major conurbations and so that interurban regions can be shaped in such a way that the identity of each urban region remains visible; so that the potential for the city dweller's recreation and relaxation shall be maintained; to preserve an ecological balance; and to protect areas of natural beauty and scientific importance.

18. It is essential to maintain the original features of the rural environment by the respect of regional architecture, the integration of new buildings into their surroundings, the maintenance or restoration of historic buildings. However, care must be taken not to limit the concept of rural renewal to the protection of groups of buildings of the traditional kind. Rural areas must not be identified with the past. It is therefore necessary that all policies for preserving the rural milieu should be part of an overall policy which reconciles modern life with traditional values. Rural areas should not become museums.

19. Needless to say, the attractiveness of certain rural areas dictates the location of developments arising from the interior such as tourism and second homes. City dwellers and promoters of recreational areas are anxious to secure exclusive rights over natural surroundings; hence rural areas fall into the hands of those who jointly and severally have the necessary funds. Such an introduction of private ownership of the area lessens or excludes society's entitlement to enjoy nature.

In any case such a situation is contradictory to the necessity for an active local economy. Rural areas should not become passive and submit to external constraints; if they are to live they must preserve the possibilities for specific economic activities.

20. The only way of laying the foundation for rural regional planning that will satisfy man's real needs, and not merely the needs arising from the absurd functioning of a system based solely on economic considerations, is to take into consideration all factors and all possible interactions, and most important of all, those values which cannot be expressed in terms of money.

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Elements for an overall concept of regional development and planning at a European level

By way of exercise, working hypotheses have been established for the planning of development centres and axes and also for Europe's open spaces.

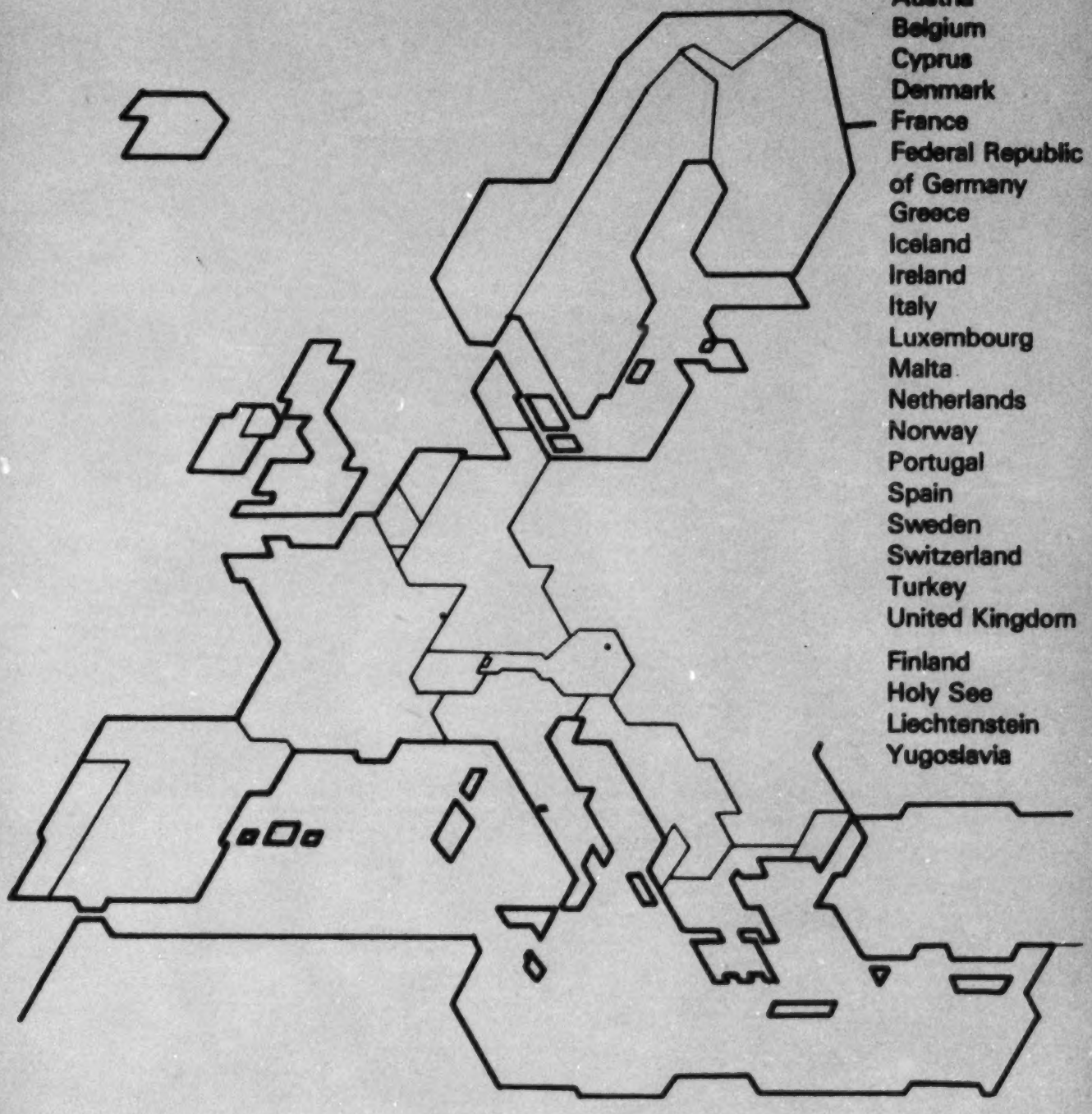
The findings are set out in an appendix form. It is clear that:

1. the existing data is far from comparable between the different countries, and a further effort must be made to harmonise the basic data;

2. it is essential to work out common criteria valid beyond national frontiers;

3. it is increasingly necessary to work out genuinely European systems that are not merely a collection of national systems.

For these various reasons, specific and more detailed studies should be undertaken for the purpose of devising a European definition of the graduated structure of centres, development axes and open spaces, within the limits of their relevance and function at European level.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